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6 February 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF, ICAPS

Subject: "Strategic and National Policy Intelligence"

1. "Strategic and national policy intelligence" cannot be defined in terms of subject matter, but only in terms of functional use. It is not two things, but one: that body of intelligence required, in peace and in war, as a basis for national policy decisions of a politico-military nature relating to the national security and transcending the exclusive competence of any particular Department.

2. This concept was commonly understood by the competent intelligence authorities at the time of the inception of the phrase. It can be sustained by reference to the Minutes of the 121st Meeting of the Joint Intelligence Committee, at which the subject was extensively discussed, and by reference to the use of the term in the context of successive papers leading up to and including the President's Letter of 22 January 1946 and E.I.A. Directive No. 1.

3. The phrase had its origin in General Donovan's memorandum for the President dated 18 November 1944 and subsequently reproduced in J.C.S. 1181. Therein he distinguished between "intelligence pertaining primarily to departmental action" and "intelligence material required by the executive branch in planning and carrying out the national policy and strategy." Recognizing that the former must remain decentralized, he contended for centralization with respect to the latter. He specified that one function of a central intelligence agency should be

Final evaluation, synthesis, and dissemination within the Government of the intelligence required to enable the Government to determine policies with respect to national planning and security in peace and war and the advancement of broad national policy.

4. J.C.S. 1181 was referred to the Joint Intelligence Committee for comment and recommendation. After exhaustive consideration of the problem, the Committee adopted J.I.C. 239/5 as its response. In that paper, the passage corresponding to that quoted above read as follows:

Accomplish the synthesis of departmental intelligence relating to the national security and the appropriate dissemination within the Government of the resulting

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strategic and national policy intelligence.

5. Having drafted J.I.C. 239/5 in the light of the discussion at the 121st Meeting of the J.I.C., I know that the passage under consideration was based on the following concepts:

a. That each Department would continue to produce the intelligence required to meet its own operating needs (i.e., "pertaining primarily to departmental action").

b. That such intelligence was inadequate as a basis for national strategy and policy (i.e., for decisions transcending the competence of any particular Department.).

c. That a central agency free of Departmental bias was required to provide, through evaluation and synthesis, the intelligence required as a basis for such decisions.

These points may be found, less succinctly stated, but with extensive elaboration, in J.I.C. 239/3, a substantially complete transcript of the discussion at the 121st Meeting of the J.I.C.

6. It is evident throughout the J.I.C. 239 Series that the Committee's thought on the production of "strategic and national policy intelligence" was projected from the example of the J.I.C. itself as an agency created expressly because Departmental intelligence, without synthesis, had been found inadequate as a basis for strategic planning on the Joint Chiefs of Staff level. The function of the J.I.C. was limited to meeting the requirements of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their supporting agencies, but by analogy it was possible to conceive of an agency designed to meet all of the intelligence requirements of national policy and strategy. This concept of an analogous, but broader, function is most clearly indicated in J.I.C. 239/1, the proposed solution supported by the Service Members, which anticipates that the J.I.C. will be superseded by a central agency charged with "the synthesis of departmental intelligence on the strategic and national policy level." This concept underlies the passage quoted from J.I.C. 239/5.

7. Since the phrase was first used in its current form in J.I.C. 239/4, a direct analysis of it at this point is appropriate. "Strategic" was used in view of the emphasis upon relation to national security and because it was anticipated that the central agency would supersede the J.I.C. in the realm of overall national strategy. "National policy" was used to modify the implications of "strategic" to exclude, on the one hand, intelligence required for the planning of particular military operations in implementation of the overall strategic concept, and to include, on the other, considerations of a political nature (but equally without intent to include intelligence required by the Department of State for its particular diplomatic operations in support of the overall strategic

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or political concept). Taken as a whole the phrase was conceived to describe not two things, but one: that politico-military area of concern to the State, War, and Navy Departments, but transcending the exclusive competence of any of them.

8. After its adoption by the J.I.C., the plan for a central intelligence agency embodied in J.I.C. 239/5 was endorsed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and was ultimately submitted to the President by the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy as their recommendation. It was the basis of the President's Letter of 22 January 1946. The passage quoted in paragraph 4 was adopted by the President with two verbal changes: the substitution of "correlation and evaluation" for "synthesis" and the deletion of "departmental." Admiral Sowers, who was present at the 121st Meeting of the J.I.C. and who assisted the President in his revision of the text of J.I.C. 239/5, attributed the first change to a mere preference of Latin to Greek, with no intent to alter the meaning. The second was intended to de-emphasize the idea of dependence upon departmental agencies. A new sentence was added to require their "full" (but not exclusive) use. Admiral Sowers's testimony on this passage establishes that the President used the phrase "strategic and national policy intelligence" in the same sense as that intended by the J.I.C. in J.I.C. 239/5.

9. The phrase as it appears in N.I.A. Directive No. 1, paragraph 2, is obviously taken from the President's Letter and used with the same intent and meaning. Continuity of the concept is assured by the fact that three persons who had participated in the 121st Meeting of the J.I.C. also participated in the preparation of N.I.A. Directive No. 1. It is notable, in support of paragraph 1 above, that in the Directive the nature of "strategic and national policy intelligence" is indicated, not in terms of subject matter, but in terms of functional use. Obviously it is that intelligence required by authorities responsible for the formulation of national strategy and policy related to the national security and not available to them through the operation of departmental agencies producing intelligence pertaining primarily to departmental action -- that is, a synthesis of all intelligence available to the Government with reference to policy problems transcending the competence of any single Department.

LUDWELL L. MONTAGUE
Chief, Intelligence Staff, ORE

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